

Questions From County/Tribal Child Care Agency Conference Call 3/31/20

1. I am getting calls from CC Providers asking how they will get paid if the parent isn't paying them. Do we just extend the authorizations without talking to the parent to see if they "need" the auth extended?

Yes, March renewal dates have been extended to June. Authorizations for these cases may also be reinstated with an end date of June 30.

2. Will parents be able to initiate payment to child care programs if their authorized child care program is temporarily closed, or the program is open, but the authorized children are not attending the program currently?

Yes, March EBT benefits that remain on EBT cards for the month of March will be deposited into the corresponding provider's bank account through ACH transfer on April 7 regardless of whether the provider was/is currently open or temporarily closed. See [DCF Guidance Order #21](#).

April EBT benefits that remain on EBT cards after April 6 will be deposited into the corresponding provider's bank account through ACH transfer on April 8.

3. Will **April reviews** be pushed out like march reviews?

Cases that were due for an annual eligibility renewal in April have had their renewal date moved to July 2020. Authorizations for these cases should be advanced to July to correspond with the new renewal date.

4. Parents out of work would normally be coded as **TBRK or ACTS**, due to the special circumstance are these cases required to be changed to TBRK or ACTS? If yes, how would continuity of care apply for SAC's that are authorized with part-time hours? Per policy, during TBRK or ACTS authorized hours cannot be increased. If No, the income would continue to be budgeted which could be unbeneficial to the parent.

If a parent is not working due to COVID-19, leave the case as employed (EMPL). Depending upon what other Income Maintenance benefits that are currently being received, the decision could be made to either end the employment or to \$0 out the income if the person is expecting to go back to work. This is to ensure that the lower household income is used when CWW determines other program benefits. When the crisis is over, and the parent indicates they are not employed at that time, change the Approved Activity to ACTS.

5. Since providers are expecting to receive Wisconsin Shares payments through 6/30/20, what is the agency expected to do if the parent or provider requests for the authorizations to end?

When a parent requests an authorization to be ended in April or later, the authorization should be ended at the end of that month.

6. **Renewals** are automatically being extended, what about parents on TBRK or ACTS if their renewal happens to be between March 31 and May 31?
The renewal extensions have occurred regardless of the parent's Approved Activity. However, TBRK and ACTS cannot be extended beyond the maximum of 3 months. Parents who are in a ACTS period at their annual eligibility renewal are not eligible to continue ACTS following the renewal, but those who are currently in a TBRK period at the time of the annual renewal (see 1.3.9.2.2) will continue in TBRK following the renewal. Parents cannot start a new TBRK period the month following a renewal. These cases will need extra attention to be sure that these requirements are followed.
7. **How are parents being notified that it is okay to pay the provider** even if the provider is closed or the child is not attending?
(Yesterday our phone lines blew up because providers were telling parents they have to transfer funds, but parents are very reluctant to do so based on prior policy.)
The Department invites local agency staff to reach out to parents to share this information. The Department will add this statement to the Parent Portal and to the Provider Portal to remind providers to ask families to make the payment. This information has also been shared with Child Care Resource and Referral agencies and Family Resource Center staff. Also, see [DCF Guidance Order #21](#).
8. My **certified child care provider** is asking if **there is any assistance coming for child care providers from the stimulus package**? She's trying to stay open, but some of her parents have stopped bringing their children. I did explain to her to go on Provider Portal to update her information for openings. I'll be letting parents know they can still pay her the subsidy that is loaded on their CC EBT Card.
Is there **direction yet from the federal government or DCF on how providers apply for help**? Licensed providers may be struggling, but I think a lot of certified providers are struggling even more.
As information regarding the stimulus package becomes available, guidance will be shared on the Department website and will be shared with local agencies and child care programs.
9. We are looking for clarification regarding **a parent requesting to change providers**. If a parent has an authorization with a provider and is requesting to change to a different provider because previous provider is closing or downsizing the number of children they care for due to new State regulations, would a **hardship need** to be entered in CSAW for either one of the scenarios?
The local agency worker can leave the first authorization in place and enter this second authorization without having to use the hardship criteria or use the pages in CSAW.
- **Example:** Alyssa has a current authorization for her daughter Addison with provider XXXXX Academy from 03/01-03/31/2020. Alyssa received a call from XXXXX Academy stating they are downsizing on the number of children they can care for

due to the new State regulations and can no longer care for Addison. Alyssa is now requesting to switch Addison to new provider, XXXXX Childcare starting 03/23-06/30/2020. Because there is an overlap in authorizations from 03/23-03/31/2020, would a hardship need to be entered?

No, not during the emergency.

- Would the hardship need to be entered if XXXXX Academy chose to close temporarily?

No, not during the emergency.

10. What actions should be taken for a provider change request, in which the change is occurring for the same provider, but to a different location?

See [DCF Guidance Order #3](#).

11. We are wondering **if all authorizations on our report should be extended at this time?**

We have some that are ending on June 3, then needing a summer schedule and no contact from the parent. Or a situation where we know the **absent parent has come into the home and he is not working**. Should we use discretion with these situations?

Set the priority to review and extend authorizations on open cases with earlier authorization end-dates. When extending authorizations, do not add hours to the authorization. Continue to verify household composition as part of the eligibility determination process. If the absent parent moved into the home prior to COVID-19 and did not have an approved activity, eligibility should fail.

12. I have a question **regarding providers continuing to get paid**. We were informed in a BOP meeting yesterday that a decision was made to pay providers through April only at this point. Current MECA policy is if a provider closes, the auth to that provider should still remain open so that provider can still get paid. If a provider closes, should these auths end April 30? Or remain open?

We do not want the local agencies to end authorizations for temporarily closed child care programs at this point. The Department will provide further guidance on authorizations to temporarily closed providers for the May EBT card load.

13. Can we now write **school-age children's authorizations** through August 31 instead of June 30?

For current ongoing cases, when a parent requests an authorization to go throughout the summer for a school-age child, the worker should verify that the child care program is currently open, and the child is attending the program.

14. We are looking for clarification on verbiage that came out saying **"streamlining eligibility" and what does this mean??** Will we be looking at handling applications differently somehow?

We do not yet have the approval for the New Emergency Authorization concept that has been planned that could provide an emergency authorization for essential workers in a streamlined eligibility approach.

In addition, DHS has initiated a Self-Attestation Workgroup (DHS lead) to expand presumptive Health Care eligibility; FoodShare is working on some options to streamline eligibility; and Wisconsin Shares will be waiving some verification requirements to simplify the application process during COVID-19. The target implementation date is April 11. A new verification code is being created that will remain valid through the next renewal. Communication will be coming regarding this new process soon.

15. The **April renewal extension letters** indicate that parent's renewal was extended to July and their authorization would be extended to July 31. We were instructed to extend authorizations to June 30, should we extend these cases to July 30?

Yes, those cases that had April renewals updated to July, should have corresponding authorizations through July. Please wait for further communication from the Department regarding extending authorizations for cases in which the May renewal date has been extended to August.

16. Since **school teachers** now have to teach online from home, will they be **included in Tier 2 of essential worker**? We do not want daycare centers to not prioritize them.

Tier 2 guidance includes a broad list of essential role examples, but is not an exclusive list. Child care programs are to prioritize Tier 2 health care related roles, but if additional space is available, care could be provided for children of online teachers. See <https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/covid-19/childcare/essential> for the essential worker definition.

17. **What if a parent does not pay the provider for April**, will those funds be expunged off the parent's card after 90 days if not used?

April benefits that remain on EBT cards will be transferred from the EBT cards to the provider's bank accounts with an ACH deposit in the month of April. See [DCF Guidance Order #21](#).

18. How has the response been from **providers updating the number of openings** they have?

Providers are updating their information. Please continue to encourage child care programs to update their information in the Provider Portal if they have changes.

19. **Is DCF encouraging providers to reopen during the crisis** and are they offering guidance?

Yes, guidance is available on the COVID-19 website to support programs that are available to provide care for essential workers. <https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/covid-19/childcare/providers>

20. Is DCF working on a **Script to give to child care workers regarding parents to keep their authorizations in place and continue to pay that provider** even if the provider is

open/closed?

Workers may plainly inform parents that during this COVID-19 emergency, they should continue to transfer payments to their open child care provider as long as there is funding available to use on their EBT cards.

21. I know we were supposed to extend authorizations that ended in March through June. Does this include **customers who are requesting the CC authorization be ended?**

See [DCF Guidance Order #3](#).

- Does it matter if the provider is open or has temporarily closed due to COVID-19?
No, this does not matter.

22. **If a provider closes due to COVID-19** and the customer finds a new provider, are we supposed to continue the authorization for the old provider, or should we end this and just set up the authorization for the new provider?

Continue the authorization to the old provider and set up an authorization with the new provider when requested.

23. With colleges closing and many students not attending post-secondary school at this time, **should we be updating the education aid tracking screen** so their clocks aren't ticking even if the authorization is continuing?

Yes, although many schools have transitioned to online rather than closing altogether. Even if school continues, end the education tracking page if parent is not meeting 20-hour per month work requirement.

24. When will the **review dates for April be extended?**

This was done over the weekend of March 28 – 29.

25. If the **parent doesn't pay the provider** and the provider gets an ACH payment, then the parent pays the following month or when this is over, is there an OP?

If the payment is made as a direct deposit, this amount will no longer be available on the EBT card load.

- Who gets the OP, Provider or parent? Is DCF pulling them back when they do the ACH payment?

Overpayments will not be assessed unless the parent or the provider demonstrates an intentional program violation.

26. **Early renewals** – Since the review dates have been extended clients calling to complete their renewal cannot be done. Is this going to be lifted for through June?

At this time, it is unknown if the June renewals will be advanced to September. Until that decision is made, families will have to do their renewal in June, unless it is further extended due to continuing health crisis.

27. **Has MILES been notified of the new policy of parents being temporarily laid off** due to COVID-19, that the activity status should stay as EMPL, not changed to TBRK? **This information is provided in question # 4 in this Q&A document.**

Case processing questions

- 1) How should we handle **access reviews** that were submitted before the renewal date was extended? **This should no longer be occurring as March, April, and May renewals have all been extended.**
- 2) **March Renewal cases that need Authorizations extended** - The report sent to agencies includes ALL authorization ending in March. Do we only extend the cases that initially had a March renewal due or, do we extend all authorizations ending in March to June 30, 2020, not to exceed current renewal date in CSAW?
Extend all March authorizations to June unless Child Care has since closed.
- 3) **Case with April and May Renewal** - If eligibility is ending before renewal for some other reason, should we push auth out to renewal date, or take no action and wait for April/May guidance from DCF?
Wait for April/May guidance.
- 4) **CSAW Error- Auth period cannot exceed 12 months.** Parent activity has been extended, but still unable to push auth out to June 30. Should we end date auth March 31, 2020, and write a new auth April 1 – June 30?
The Department is working on removing this validation, so if you run into this validation you will need to write a new authorization beginning 4/1/20.
- 5) If a case with a **March renewal was closed earlier in March (March 16)** for not completing the March renewal, does the case stay closed? Case XXXXXXXXXX renewal date did not extend to June.
All renewals were extended for open cases. The case example that was provided here, closed for lack of approved activity, not for lack of renewal.